

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

USMICCION EC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, BE

SUBJECT: CONVERSATIONS ON PORTUGUESE SITUATION

SUMMARY. BELGIAN JOURNALIST (COLETTE BRAECKMAN) WHO IS SPECIALIST ON PORTUGAL GAVE US HER VIEWS ON PORTUGUESE SITUATION FOLLOWING VISIT THERE LAST WEEK OF JULY. BRAECKMAN ESTIMATES SITUATION IN PORTUGAL IS ON VERGE OF RADICALIZATION TO THE LEFT OR TO THE RIGHT, BUT THINKS THAT COMMUNIST PARTY HAS BEEN BY-PASSED BY EVENTS AND NO LONGER HAS ANY CONTROL OVER REVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL. DANGER FOR SOCIALISTS IS THAT THEY MAY PROVOKE MILITARY INTO

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LEFTIST TAKEOVER OUT OF FEAR OF RETURN OF SPINOLA AS ECONOMIC

SITUATION DETERIORATES. A BELGIAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSB) OFFICIAL TOLD US PSB WAS NOT INVITED TO SOCIALIST PARTY CONFERENCE IN STOCKHOLM. THIS HAS ANGERED PSB CO-PRESIDENT ANDRE COOLS, WHO HAS FOSTERED PSB INTEREST AND SUPPORT FOR PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS. END SUMMARY.

1. COLETTE BRAECKMAN, LATIN AMERICAN AND IBERIAN SPECIALIST FOR FRENCH LANGUAGE DAILY LE SOIR WHO RECENTLY AUTHORED BOOK ON PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION, GAVE US FOLLOWING VIEWS AFTER ONE WEEK VISIT TO PORTUGAL AT END OF JULY. BRAECKMAN THINKS MILITARY IS MORE DIVIDED THAN EVER OVER WHICH DIRECTION IT WANTS REVOLUTION TO GO. SHE SAID TRIUMVIRATE WILL BE AS UNWORKABLE AS COUNCIL OF REVOLUTION HAS BEEN AS THREE MEMBERS HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON AND REPRESENT OPPOING TENDENCIES IN ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. SHE BELIEVES MILITARY WILL BE PUSHED TO TAKE MORE RADICAL MEASURES EITHER TO LEFT OF TO RIGHT AS ECONOMIC SITUATION DETERIORATES IN PORTUGAL, WHICH BOUND TO OCCUR.

2. BRAECKMAN HAS CLOSE CONTACTS WITH SOCIALISTS. SHE FEELS THAT MARIO SOARES HAS MADE NUMBER OF MISTAKES IN PAST FEW MONTHS AND HAS HELPED TO PROVOKE RADICALIZATION OF SITUATION. SHE IS CONVINCED SOCIALIST PARTY IS IN TOUCH WITH FORMER GENERAL SPINOLA AND HIS COLLABORATORS. SHE CITED SPINOLA INTERVIEW IN PORTUGUESE WEEKLY EXPRESSO AS WORK OF ONE OF SOARES' AIDES (MANUEL ALLEGRE). SHE CLAIMS TEXT WAS SHOWN TO SPINOLA DN RECEIVED HIS ENDORSEMENT BEFORE PUBLICATION. BRAECKMAN ALSO BELIEVES CONTACTS HAVE OCCURED BETWEEN SPINOLA AND SOARES' SUPPORTERS IN PARIS. SHE THINKS SOARES IS MAKING SERIOUS MISTAKE IN FLIRITNG WITH SPINOLA BECAUSE LATTER HAS NO REAL SUPPORT AMONG PORTUGUESE PEOPLE.

3. BRAECKMAN HAS HAD NUMEROUS CONTACTS WITH COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS SINCE REVOLUTION. ON RECENT VISIT SHE FOUND THEM IN MOST DEFENSIVE POSITION SINCE REVOLUTION. SHE THINKS THERE HAS BEEN RAPID TURNAROUND IN THEIR ROLE IN REVOLUTION IN PAST SIX MONTHS. REVOLUTION HAS BYPASSED COMMUNIST PARTY AND ITS IDEOLOGY IN HER VIEW. WHILE COMMUNISTS STILL CONTROL INTERSINDICAL THEY HAVE LOST MOST OF THEIR CONTROL OVER MEMBER UNIONS OF THIS ORGANIZATION. BRAECKMAN CONCEDES THAT COMMUNIST PARTY MAY BE ARMING FOR SHOWDOWN LATER WITH SOCIALISTS, BUT SHE DOUBTED WHETHER MILITARY WILL LET THIS HAPPEN. SHE EXPECTS EITHER LEFT OR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RIGHT WING OF AFM WILL USE COMMUNISTS TO ESTABLISH ITS CONTROL OVER PORTUGAL.

4. BRAECKMAN SAID BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS VERY INTERESTED IN SITUATION IN PORTUGAL AND HAS AMBASSADOR WHO UNDERSTAND SITUATION THERE. (AMBASSADOR MAX WERY IS A SOCIALIST.) SHE THINKS FOREGIN MINISTRY IS GIVING AMBASSADOR AS MUCH SUPPORT AS IT CAN IN EC AND ELSEWHERE. HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE BELGIUM CAN DO IN VIEW

OF OPPOSITION OF FRANCE, GREAT BRITAIN, AND ITALY TO GRANT
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL UNTIL ASSURANCES HAVE BEEN GIVEN
THAT DEMOCRACY WILL BE PRESERVED. SHE THINKS IT IS MISTAKE FOR
EC TO BARGAIN OVER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL NOW SINCE
THIS WILL ONLY PLAY INTO HANDS OF ONE OF EXTREMIST
GROUPS IN AFM.

5. BELGIAN SOCIALIST PARTY OFFICIAL TOLD US PSB WAS NOT INVITED
TO SOCIALIST PARTY CONFERENCE IN STOCKHOLM. HE SAID PSB
CO-PRESIDENT ANDRE COOLS WAS ANGERED THAT PSB WAS EXCLUDED.
COOLS HAS CHAMPIONED PSB'S ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS
INCLUDING FUND RAISING DRIVE PRIOR TO GENERAL ELECTIONS. (
MEMCON POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT.)
RENNER

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